

VZCZCXRO8847
PP RUEHCN RUEHGH
DE RUEHHK #2054/01 1380329
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 180329Z MAY 06
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO RUEHC/SECSTATEWASHDC PRIORITY 6742
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HONG KOG 002054

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP AND EAP/CM
NS FOR DENNIS WILDER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/18/2031
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [HK](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: MNUSCRIPT OF ZHAO ZIYANG CONVERSATIONS LEAKED TO
ONG KONG NEWSPAPERS

REF: 05 HONG KONG 03309

Classified By: E/P Chief Simon Schuchat. Reasons: 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On May 15, Liu Baopu, the son of Zhao Ziyang's aide Bao Tong, discussed with poloff the recent controversy over a leaked manuscript about Zhao written by Zong Fengming, Zhao's qigong meditation coach. Zong, 86, recently complained to the media that portions of his manuscript, based on conversations with Zhao between 1992 and 2004, had been leaked and published without his authorization in two Hong Kong newspapers. A "former PRC provincial governor" had "betrayed" Zong, by prematurely leaking it to two Hong Kong newspapers, according to Liu, who said the manuscript contained some interesting insights into Zhao but did not offer any groundbreaking revelations. Zong confirmed that detained journalist Ching Cheong had contacted him about obtaining the rights to his book, but denied that his manuscript was related to Ching's arrest. Publishers' interest in the manuscript had been damaged by the leaks in the Hong Kong media, concluded Liu. End Summary.

Author Complains about Leaked Manuscript

¶2. (C) On May 15, Liu Baopu, the son of Zhao Ziyang's aide Bao Tong, discussed with poloff the recent controversy over a leaked manuscript of conversations with Zhao, written by Zong Fengming, Zhao's childhood friend and qigong meditation coach. Zong, an 86-year old former Communist Party official, contacted the "Washington Post" and the "South China Morning Post (SCMP)" in early May to complain that portions of his manuscript, detailing his conversations with Zhao from 1992-2004, had been published without his authorization in the "Hong Kong Economic Journal (HKEJ)" and "Ming Pao." Zong claimed that a significant portion of the manuscript was about the June 4 Tiananmen incident and that Zhao had personally vetted the first draft of the book. Chan King-cheung, Chief Editor of the HKEJ, reportedly responded to Zong's allegations by saying, "we believe the content of the manuscript is genuine" and that the newspaper was unaware of Zong's role in the manuscript.

¶3. (C) Zong had provided earlier versions of the manuscript to friends for their review, Liu said, and a "former PRC provincial governor" had "betrayed" Zong by leaking it to the two Hong Kong newspapers. Liu speculated that this was not done out of greed, but that this individual wanted to share Zhao's thoughts and naively allowed the Hong Kong newspapers to serialize, abridge and publish them under pen names. These snippets of Zong's manuscript lacked the impact that a properly edited book could have had, complained Liu.

Sensitive Manuscript Interesting, Not Groundbreaking

14. (C) Liu told poloff that he had read an early version of the entire manuscript two years ago. Commenting on the book, Liu said that Zong had accurately jotted down his conversations with Zhao, but having never worked in the inner circle of top PRC leaders, was unable to contextualize many of Zhao's comments. The manuscript contained some interesting insights into Zhao's thinking, said Liu, but did not offer any groundbreaking revelations. Nevertheless, Liu believed it was a "hot" manuscript and had shown it to several prominent members of the U.S. human rights community to gauge interest in the book. He had also heard that the Central Government desperately wanted to prevent the manuscript from being published. When asked if Beijing knew Zong was the author, Liu said, "yes, but what are you going to do to an old man?"

15. (C) Initially, Zhao's children tried to dissuade Zong from publishing the manuscript, arguing that it went against Zhao's wishes. Zhao's son-in-law purportedly witnessed a heated discussion between the two friends in which Zhao told Zong not to publish the manuscript, said Liu. However, after Zhao's death last January, his family asked Bao Tong, Zhao's trusted former aide, about the matter. Bao interpreted Zhao's words to mean that he did not want the manuscript to be published until after his death. Bao agreed to edit the book, but Liu said that his father, who is under house arrest, was never able to get a copy of the elusive manuscript.

Ching Cheong

* Missing Section 002 *
